



Office of the Mayor

LOCKPORT MUNICIPAL BUILDING
One Locks Plaza
Lockport, New York 14094
Phone (716) 439-6665
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Anne E. McCaffrey, Mayor

RECEIVED

JAN 21 2016

CITY CLERK OFFICE

VETO

I, Anne E. McCaffrey, Mayor of the City of Lockport, hereby acknowledge receipt of resolutions 012016.6 and 012016.8 duly certified by the City Clerk on 1/21/16 and in accordance with Sections 65 and 66 of the City of Lockport Charter I hereby veto resolutions 012016.6 and 012016.8.

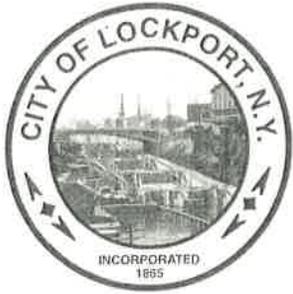
Date: 1/21/16

Anne E. McCaffrey

Mayor, Anne E. McCaffrey

My objections are annexed hereto and made a part hereof by reference.





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Anne E. McCaffrey, Mayor



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FEB - 3 2016

Veto Message #1
January 21, 2016

CITY CLERK OFFICE

Today, I vetoed resolutions 012016.6 and 012016.8 sponsored by Alderman Abbott on January 20, 2016 and adopted by the Common Council. I did so because these actions are clearly a step backwards financially and ethically for the City of Lockport. As I recently said in my inauguration speech, I will sound the alarm whenever I see a serious lapse in judgement and my responsibility is to you - our residents - to protect your hard earned dollars and to ensure that our city is run with the highest of ethics.

For the past 2 years, I have focused on putting our city back on the path to financial stability. This required cost benefit analysis and a commitment to consider all options to ensure that our services are provided in the most cost efficient manner. If there is a less expensive way to provide services, we must pursue that option.

Last year, the City entered into discussions with Niagara Falls for a shared services agreement for assessment services. The agreement ensured that a qualified assessor will be in the City of Lockport weekly for the entire year, as compared to four months this past year. The cost of this agreement is \$30,000 per year. I discussed this agreement in detail with our contact person at the New York State Financial Restructuring Board (FRB), who indicated to me that he was pleased to see Lockport pursuing shared assessment services. He also said there was a very good chance that this type of shared services agreement would be supported and incentivized with an FRB grant to the City of Lockport and possibly Niagara Falls. He told me that this type of action is what is necessary to increase efficiency and is an excellent step towards decreasing the cost of city government and emerging from fiscal distress.

However, the Common Council voted to abandon this shared services concept and to force Lockport out of this agreement. With all due respect, the arguments some Common Council members provided are contradictory and simply not informed.

First, some Common Council members claim to like shared services – just not this one – a hypothetical one that doesn't exist. Second, they want a Full Time assessor in the City of Lockport – but state that we should share this person with another municipality. So, if we share this person, then they aren't full time for the City of Lockport, are they? So which is it? Third, in order to ensure that an employee of the department, who just happens to be Alderman Mullane's sister, is the one protected and promoted, they want to create a third position in the department, which they claim will also save us money. The math is simple - 3 people cost more than 2 people, especially when adding in the health care, pension and legacy costs. A full time assessor position with two support staff will increase the assessor's department budget line in excess of \$77,000 which includes pension and health care costs over the shared services contract figure and this amounts to an almost 1% increase to taxpayers in future years' budgets. Unfortunately, the city cannot afford reckless tax increases when a solid cost-effective alternative arrangement is available to the City.

In addition, the action to reduce the legal consultant line by more than half shows the Common Council's intent that they do not want provide the essential resources and expertise to represent the city. The New York State Comptroller's Office approved the City's 2016 budget after a careful review to ensure that each line was properly funded. By drastically reducing the legal budget line, this action has in effect created an unbalanced budget and may cause the Comptroller's Office to be concerned. In addition, Standard and Poor's recently improved our bond rating to "stable" and indicated that this rating could be impacted by the new Common Council's actions. The ramifications could be far-reaching.

There are serious problems in this Common Council action. In my opinion, it is financially irresponsible and a serious lapse in judgement to demand that an Alderman's sister be promoted and financially benefit. Isn't this the type of behavior that gripped City Hall for decades and needs to stop?

I respect our City Charter and the separation of powers between the branches of government which are provided for. So, please know that I will not stand by quietly and watch reckless and serious financial mistakes occur, without doing my part in using my executive powers, to sound the alarm to the taxpayers of our City when necessary.